Amendments to the claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): An image processing system including:

a scanner for reading a document image; ~~and~~

a terminal apparatus connected to said scanner in a manner permitting communications so as to transmit an operation instruction to said scanner[[,]]; ~~wherein~~ and

a server including associated information storing means for storing associated information in which unprocessed document information and fingerprint information are associated with each other, the server being connected to said scanner and said terminal apparatus in a manner permitting communications, wherein

said scanner comprises:

first fingerprint information reading means for reading fingerprint information of an operator; ~~and~~

first fingerprint information storing means for storing temporarily the fingerprint information read by said first fingerprint information reading means,

document image reading means for reading a document image so as to collate said document image with the associated information of a past time stored in the associated storing means of the server;

collating means for collating the fingerprint information stored in the first fingerprint information storing means and fingerprint information contained in the associated information of the past time, and for collating the document image information read by the document image reading means and the document image information contained in the associated information of the past time; and

means for generating new associated information in which the fingerprint information read by the first fingerprint information reading means and the document image information read by the document image reading means are associated with each

other, and for storing the newly generated associated information in the associated

information storing means of the server when the document image information read by

the document image reading means and the document image information contained in the

associated information of the past time does not match;

said terminal apparatus comprises:

second fingerprint information reading means for reading second fingerprint

information of the operator or a different operator; and

second fingerprint information storing means for storing temporarily the second

fingerprint information read by said second fingerprint information reading means;

~~and~~wherein

when the associated information newly generated by the scanner is stored in the

associated information storing means of the server, or when the document image information

read by the document image reading means and the fingerprint information read by the first

fingerprint information reading means matches the document image information and the

fingerprint information contained in the associated information of the past time, respectively,

fingerprint information collating means for collating the fingerprint information stored in said

first fingerprint information storing means with the second fingerprint information read by said

second fingerprint information reading means by means of communications between said

scanner and said terminal apparatus[[;]], and operation permitting means for permitting the

operation of said scanner in response to the operation instruction inputted through said terminal

apparatus on the basis of the result of collation in said fingerprint information collating means

are provided either in said scanner or in said terminal apparatus, or alternatively any one of said

fingerprint information collating means and said operation permitting means is provided in said

scanner while the other one is provided in said terminal apparatus, and

~~wherein the fingerprint information stored in the scanner and the second fingerprint~~

~~information stored in the terminal apparatus are deleted upon completion of a reading operation~~

~~of the document image or when a predetermined time has elapsed before the reading operation is~~

~~completed~~

when the operation is permitted by the operation permitting means and a reading

operation of a document is completed by the scanner, or when a predetermined time has elapsed

before the reading operation is completed, the associated information generated and stored in the associated information storing means of the server for the document is deleted together with the fingerprint information stored in the scanner and the terminal device.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The image processing system as set forth in claim 1, wherein when collation by said fingerprint information collating means results in a match, said operation permitting means permits the operation of said scanner in response to the operation instruction inputted through said terminal apparatus.

Claims 3-4 (canceled)

Claim 5 (currently amended): The image processing system as set forth in claim [[4]]1, wherein ~~either said scanner or said terminal apparatus comprises:~~

~~associated image information collating means for collating the document image information read by said document image reading means with the image information contained in said associated information of a past time;~~

~~associated fingerprint information collating means for collating the fingerprint information stored in said first fingerprint information storing means with the fingerprint information contained in said associated information of the past time; and~~

operation inhibiting means for inhibiting the operation of said scanner is provided in either said scanner or said terminal apparatus, when the document image information read by the document image reading means and the document image information contained in the associated information of the past matches, and when the fingerprint information read by the first fingerprint information reading means and the fingerprint information contained in the associated information ~~when the collation by said associated image information collating means matches and the collation by said associated fingerprint information collating means~~ does not match.

Claim 6 (canceled)

Claim 7 (currently amended): The image processing system as set forth in claim [[6]]1, wherein

when a document is removed before the reading operation of the ~~image~~ document by said scanner is completed, ~~said associated information deleting means does not delete~~ the associated information generated for the removed document is not deleted.

Claims 8-15 (canceled)

Claim 16 (currently amended): A scanner connected to a server including associated information storing means for storing associated information in which unprocessed document information and fingerprint information are associated with each other, and to a terminal apparatus for transmitting an operation instruction for reading a document image in a manner permitting communications ~~so as to receive an operation instruction for reading a document image~~, comprising:

fingerprint information reading means for reading a fingerprint information of an operator;

fingerprint information storing means for temporarily storing the fingerprint information read by said fingerprint information reading means;

document image reading means for reading a document image so as to collate said document image with the associated information of a past time stored in the associated storing means of the server;

collating means for collating the fingerprint information stored in the fingerprint information storing means and fingerprint information contained in the associated information of the past time, and for collating the document image information read by the document image reading means and the document image information contained in the associated information of the past time;

means for generating new associated information in which the fingerprint information read by the fingerprint information reading means and the document image information read by the document image reading means are associated with each other, and for storing the newly generated associated information in the associated information storing means of the server when

the document image information read by the document image reading means and the document image information contained in the associated information of the past time does not match; and

fingerprint information collating means for collating the fingerprint information read by said fingerprint information reading means with a fingerprint information acquired by said terminal apparatus by means of communications with said terminal apparatus, when the associated information newly generated by the scanner is stored in the associated information storing means of the server, or when the document image information read by the document image reading means and the fingerprint information read by the fingerprint information reading means matches the document image information and the fingerprint information contained in the associated information of the past time, respectively; and

operation permitting means for permitting the operation in response to the operation instruction inputted through said terminal apparatus on the basis of the result of collation by said fingerprint information collating means,

~~wherein the fingerprint information stored in the scanner is deleted upon completion of a reading operation of the document image or when a predetermined time has elapsed before the reading operation is completed~~

when the operation is permitted by the operation permitting means and a reading operation of a document is completed by the scanner, or when a predetermined time has elapsed before the reading operation is completed, the fingerprint information stored in the scanner is deleted together with the associated information generated and stored in the associated information storing means of the server for the document.

Claim 17 (canceled)

Claim 18 (currently amended): The scanner as set forth in claim [[17]]16, wherein when a document is removed before the reading operation of the ~~image~~ document is completed, ~~said fingerprint information deleting means does not delete~~ the fingerprint information from said fingerprint information storing means is not deleted.

Claim 19 (currently amended): A terminal apparatus connected to <u>both</u> a scanner <u>for reading a document image</u> and a <u>server including associated information storing means for storing associated information in which unprocessed document information and fingerprint information are associated with each other</u> in a manner permitting communications so as to transmit an operation instruction for causing said scanner to read a document image, comprising:

fingerprint information reading means for reading a fingerprint information of an operator;

fingerprint information storing means for temporarily storing the fingerprint information read by said fingerprint information reading means;

fingerprint information collating means for collating a fingerprint information acquired by said scanner with the fingerprint information read by said fingerprint information reading means by means of communications with said scanner <u>when a new associated information in which the fingerprint information acquired by the scanner and the document image information are associated with each other are stored in the associated information storing means of the server, or when the fingerprint information and the document image information matches the fingerprint information and the document image information contained in the associated information of the past stored in the associated information storing means, respectively</u>; and

operation permitting means for permitting the operation of said scanner in response to the inputted operation instruction on the basis of the result of collation in said fingerprint information collating means,

~~wherein the fingerprint information stored in the terminal apparatus is deleted upon completion of a reading operation of the document image or when a predetermined time has elapsed before the reading operation is completed~~

<u>wherein when the operation is permitted by the operation permitting means and a reading operation of a document is completed by the scanner, or when a predetermined time has elapsed before the reading operation is completed, the fingerprint information stored in the terminal apparatus is deleted together with the associated information generated and stored in the associated information storing means of the server for the document.</u>

Claim 20 (canceled)

Claim 21 (currently amended): The terminal apparatus as set forth in claim [[20]]19, wherein when a document is removed from said scanner before the reading operation of the ~~image~~ document is completed, ~~said fingerprint information deleting means does not delete~~ the fingerprint information generated for the removed document from said fingerprint information storing means is not deleted.